

# Railwatch

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## A new King's Cross but what about Thameslink 2000?

Two years from now, Eurostars from Paris and Brussels will be arriving via the completed Channel Tunnel rail link at London St Pancras, left, above.

With luck, the King's Cross area will by then be transformed into something like the architect's picture shown here.

In February, the Department for Transport gave the go-ahead for this £400million Network Rail plan which involves a new ticket hall for the Underground and a new concourse for King's Cross main line

and suburban stations – although planning and funding is still not finalised. Now the biggest unresolved issue in the area is the lack of a new station for Thameslink which will have a new franchise in a year's time.

Bedford Commuters Association has been urging the authorities to take swift action to ensure that Thameslink and the new Thameslink station can be part of rail's brave new Euro-linked future.

The connecting tunnels between the Great Northern suburban lines

and Thameslink have been completed as part of the CTRL works in the area. But no tracks will be laid or points installed at either the GN end or the Thameslink end.

The BCA believes the work and the fitting out of the new Thameslink station should be done as soon as possible – and definitely before the international station opens – to minimise disruption to passengers. It believes existing Networker trains could run an intermediate Thameslink 2000 service until the full scheme is approved. The BCA points to Germany as an exam-

ple for British ministers. In Berlin the new Lehrter station opens next year and fully integrates ICE high-speed services, conventional main line trains, regional rail services, S-bahn and U-bahn trains as well as trams and buses. The BCA suggests that Transport Secretary Alistair Darling and his planners visit Berlin.

Picture: NETWORK RAIL

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